

Message Text

PAGE 01 NATO 06198 192344Z

14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 6198

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO

SUBJECT: DECEMBER 19 NAC: PERMREPS INITIAL REACTION TO THE SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL FOR MEETINGS OF ALLIED POLITICAL DIRECTORS

BEGIN SUMMARY: COUNCIL HELD PRELIMINARY UNINSTRUCTED DISCUSSION OF U.S. PROPOSAL FOR MEETINGS OF ALLIED POLITICAL DIRECTORS AND AGREED TO RETURN TO SUBJECT EARLY IN JANUARY. REACTION WAS MIXED, WITH SKEPTICS (FRANCE, FRG, TURKEY AND NORWAY) HOLDING VIEW THAT EXISTING CONSULTATIVE MACHINERY WAS ADEQUATE. BELGIAN, CANADIAN, ITALIAN, DUTCH AND GREEK PERMREPS EXPRESSED CAUTIOUS WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT A FIRST MEETING OF ALLIANCE POLITICAL DIRECTORS ON AN EXPERIMENTAL AND INFORMAL BASIS. UK AND DENMARK DID NOT COMMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. SYG LUNS OPENED DISCUSSION BY SUPPORTING SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL WHICH HE BELIEVED WOULD BENEFIT BOTH THE POLITICAL DIRECTORS AND THE COUNCIL. HE SUGGESTED THAT THESE MEETINGS TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF REGULAR SESSIONS OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL, WITH PERMREPS REMAINING AS HEADS OF DELEGATION, AND THAT PERMREPS DECIDE SUBJECTS FOR AGENDA IN ADVANCE. LUNS DID NOT FAVOR CONNECTING THESE MEETINGS DIRECTLY WITH MINISTERIALS AND SUGGESTED THAT THEY MIGHT TAKE PLACE ON AN OPEN-ENDED BASIS (APPARENTLY TO GIVE FRANCE THE OPTION OF NOT PARTICIPATING) AND, IF DESIRED, IN CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NATO 06198 192344Z

RESTRICTED SESSION.

2. DE STAERCKE, (BELGIAN) CAUTIONED THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO RESOLVE POLITICAL PROBLEMS THROUGH A PROCEDURAL DEVICE, BUT

STILL BELIEVED THAT MEETINGS WITH ALLIANCE POLITICAL DIRECTORS WOULD PROVIDE A USEFUL POOLING OF IDEAS AND "PERPLEXITIES" AND WOULD HELD INVOLVE POLITICAL DIRECTORS MORE DIRECTLY IN ALLIANCE AFFAIRS. DE STAERCKE THOUGHT THAT MEETINGS MIGHT TAKE PLACE EVERY TWO MONTHS. FIRST MEETING SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS EXPERIMENTAL AND SHOULD BE HELD AS INFORMALLY AS POSSIBLE.

3. U.S. REP SHARED DE STAERCKE'S VIEW THAT THESE MEETINGS SHOULD BE HELD AT REGULAR INTERVALS AND THAT THE FIRST MEETING WOULD BE EXPERIMENTAL. IF A FAVORABLE CONSENSUS ON THE IDEA DEVELOPED, HE SUGGESTED THE COUNCIL MIGHT BEGIN TO IDENTIFY CERTAIN TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION, PERHAPS LOOKING TOWARDS A FIRST MEETING IN LATE JANUARY OR EARLY FEBRUARY.

4. MENZIES (CANADA) WELCOMED IDEA OF MEETINGS WITH POLITICAL DIRECTORS, SINCE THERE WAS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT BY THOSE WORKING IN CAPITALS. POLITICAL DIRECTORS WILL BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO UNDERSTAND COUNCIL CONCERNS WHEN THEY APPROVE INSTRUCTIONS.

5. DE ROSE (FRANCE) WAS "FULL OF HESITATION," BUT WAS WILLING TO RESERVE FINAL JUDGMENT ON THE SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL, SINCE DE STAERCKE AND OTHERS APPEARED TO THINK IT WAS A GOOD IDEA. HE WISHED HOWEVER TO SHARE HIS "DOUBTS" WITH THE COUNCIL. HE SHARED DE STAERCKE'S CONCERN OVER TRYING TO RESOLVE BASIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS WITH A PROCEDURAL ARTIFICE. HE ALSO DOUBTED THAT THE ATTENDANCE OF POLITICAL DIRECTORS WOULD HELP THE COUNCIL SUCCEED WHERE IT HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO DO SO ON ITS OWN. THE SUCCESS OF PERMANENT COUNCIL WAS DUE IN LARGE MEASURE TO THE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG PERMREPS THEMSELVES AND THE FACT THAT THEY COULD WORK IN AN UNHURRIED WAY TO REACH CONSENSUS. MOREOVER, WHO WOULD SPEAK FOR HIS GOVERNMENT AT SUCH MEETINGS?

6. KRAPF (FRG) SHARED DOUBTS OF DE ROSE. PROBLEM WAS NOT ONE OF MACHINERY, SINCE THERE IS ADEQUATE MACHINERY AT NATO, IN CONTRAST TO THE SERIOUS LACK OF MACHINERY IN THE EC. NEW MACHINERY
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PAGE 03 NATO 06198 192344Z

WOULD NOT SOLVE THE "PROBLEM OF EUROPE'S CONSULTATIONS WITH THE U.S." IN FAST BREAKING SITUATIONS, IT WOULD BE QUICKER TO GET INSTRUCTIONS FROM CAPITALS THAN TO HAVE POLITICAL DIRECTORS COME PERSONALLY. KRAPF DID BELIEVE, THAT IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR POLITICAL DIRECTORS TO HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE COUNCIL'S PROBLEMS, BUT SHARED DE STAERCKE'S VIEW THAT ANY SUCH MEETINGS SHOULD BE HIGHLY INFORMAL.

7. CHOROFAS (GREECE) WAS ATTRACTED BY DE ROSE'S ARGUMENTATION, BUT THOUGHT POLITICAL DIRECTOR'S MEETING WOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO TIME PRESSURE SINCE THEY WOULD NOT BE ASKED TO MAKE DECISIONS AT THEIR MEETINGS WITH THE COUNCIL, NOR SHOULD THEY HAVE TO COPE WITH SPECIFIC PROBLEMS. IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR

THEM, HOWEVER, TO "FEEL THE ATMOSPHERE." ERALP (TURKEY) SAID THAT THE POLITICAL DIRECTORS MEETING IDEA AVOIDED THE CENTRAL ISSUE, WHICH IS NOT THE LACK OF FULL CONSULTATIONS, BUT THE LACK OF TIMELY CONSULTATION. BUSCH (NORWAY) AGREED WITH FRANCE AND FRG AND CONSIDERED PRESENT MACHINERY ADEQUATE. BUWALDA (NETHERLANDS) AGREED WITH ERALP THAT IT WAS NOT JUST A MATTER OF MACHINERY, BUT STILL BELIEVED THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR POLITICAL DIRECTORS TO BE MORE AWARE OF THE ALLIANCE PERSPECTIVE.

8. DE STAERCKE SAW THE PROBLEM IN TERMS OF "PERMEABILITY" AND SUGGESTED THAT COUNCIL RETURN TO THIS QUESTION AT THE FIRST PERMREPS LUNCH IN JANUARY FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION.

9. CONCLUDING THIS FIRST DISCUSSION, LUNS REMARKED THAT HE PERSONALLY SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF A MEETING OF THE 15 POLITICAL DIRECTORS BECAUSE HE BELIEVED THE POLITICAL DIRECTORS OF THE NINE NEEDED MORE EXPOSURE TO ALLIANCE PROBLEMS IN CONTRAST TO THEIR PRESENT PREOCCUPATION WITH EC PROBLEMS. HE STATED THAT THE COUNCIL WOULD RETURN TO THE SUBJECT EARLY IN JANUARY.
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